

# **Service Level Agreement identifying performance management measures and procedures to be followed from 1 April 2013**

## **Service Level Agreement for the provision of a SDNPA Development Management Service**

**Between the South Downs National Park Authority**

**And**

**Winchester City Council**

### **I. Context**

This Service Level Agreement (SLA) should be read in the context of the Agency Agreement dated 7 September 2011 which was completed under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 between the SDNPA and Winchester City Council (the host authority). It provides the more detailed specification of the standards of service, outputs and outcomes required by both parties. This SLA relates only to those parts of the authority's development management service that are included in the delegated authority, as set out in the Section 101 legal agreement.

The SLA includes the responsibilities and standards to be met by both the SDNPA and the host authority. It includes the level of service that should be provided by both parties through jointly agreed performance indicators and the targets to be achieved, and the monitoring and review process to be followed. It will be operative from 1 April 2013 onwards and will continue to operate until such time that either party resolves to terminate the Agency Agreement or agrees to alternative measures. Some measures have already been introduced and these will also continue as above.

The detailed provisions are based partially on the outcome of the Addison Associates MEPS PLUS review carried out jointly during 2011, together with known best practice and following discussions with all authorities involved in this Agreement. The MEPS PLUS review was a joint piece of work which examined processes and procedures followed by all 15 Councils that (at that time) provided a planning service within and outside the National Park. The aim was to identify, introduce and improve best practice right across the South Downs National Park.

The SLA will be the subject of regular review by both parties and will form the basis of regular performance reports on all indicators. It will also be used to help inform the annual negotiations that take place each year for the development management service that is provided by each host authority.

## 2. Focus of approach

The structure of this Service Level Agreement follows the general approach to the processing of planning applications and related development management matters. It has also been designed to follow three key themes:-

**Customer focus and outcomes:** - The SDNPA's philosophy is to help ensure that all customers receive a good development management service and one that focusses upon them. The SDNPA planning service aims to be at least as good as the best service provided by our most customer focussed partners and also one which improves, year on year.

**Quality of service.** - The development management service must reflect the importance of the landscape and the aims and objectives of the Management Plan for the South Downs National Park, as well as our statutory purposes and duty. Decisions made and the background to them being made must always be guided by these principles and the importance of the landscape. The service must, therefore, deliver a high quality environment and ensure that these important considerations, enshrined within the purposes and duty of National Parks, are always a key part of the evaluation of all development management decisions.

**Performance** – A high quality service should also be efficient in terms of processes and procedures and must be timely and effective. Appropriate performance management of approaches will help to ensure that both of these important objectives are met.

These three themes apply throughout this SLA and help to drive the measures set out below. These measures should help ensure that the development management service delivered by the SDNPA and the host authority is both effective and robust.

### 3. **Objectives**

The aims of the SLA are, therefore, designed to help ensure that:

- the cost, type and level of service across all parts of the South Downs National Park is as consistent as possible, including processes and procedures and performance
- the level of service is at least good practice and where possible, best practice
- the services are provided as efficiently and effectively as possible, so as to ensure that good value for money is provided and to help reduce costs, where possible
- Customer satisfaction can be established against known expectations and is then used to help guide future service improvements.
- The potential for confusion and conflict between the relevant authorities, the applicants and the community is minimised, thereby limiting any risk of complaint or legal challenge against processes or decisions.

The SLA has been designed in recognition of the established partnership arrangement between the host authority and the SDNPA and seeks to drive service excellence, reflecting best practice in the delivery of a development management service. It is also based on:-

- Indicators being capable of recording and measurement and reporting from the SDNPA UNiform system, where possible.
- The Indicator targets being realistic and relating to best practice.

**South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)**

**Signed:**

**Date: March 2013**

**Name: Tim Slaney**

**Role: Director of Planning**

**Winchester City Council (WCC)**

**Signed:**

**Date: March 2013**

**Name: Simon Finch**

**Role: Head of Planning Management**

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>How will this be measured or delivered?</u>	<u>Target</u>
<b>A.) <u>Pre-application advice - provision, charging and recording.</u></b>	i) Information on procedure and cost is publicly available.	SDNPA	Relevant website.	Operational from 7 January 2013.
	ii) Service standards are in place for providing advice for all applications. Written information is available (including validation requirements).	SDNPA	Published timescales and processes are in place for responding to all requests.	Standards to be in place by 1 April 2013.
	iii) A consistent charging regime is in place across the SDNP.	SDNPA	Standard charging regime to be introduced across the South Downs National Park.	Initial operation from 7 January 2013 and to be reviewed annually thereafter.

	<p>iv) Planning applications that have been the subject of pre-application advice should be processed and determined more quickly.</p>	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	<p>All minor and other applications that receive and follow pre-application advice are determined within 30 working days from validation.</p>	Performance to be measured from 1 April 2013 onwards.
	<p>v) SDNPA to be advised of all relevant pre-application approaches which have the potential to generate a “significant” application.</p>	Winchester City Council	<p>All major applications that receive and follow pre-application advice are determined within 60 working days from validation.</p> <p>Record of pre-application approach to be recorded on UNIFORM and Link Officer advised, using template on SDNPA UNIFORM system, within 2 working days.</p>	<p>Performance to be measured from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p> <p>Performance to be measured from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p>

<b><u>B) Financial arrangements for the recording of pre-application advice fees and implementation of a common charging regime.</u></b>	i) Standard fees in place for the provision pre-application advice across the South Downs National Park.	SDNPA	Pre-application advice scheme is available and publicised on host authority and SDNPA websites.	Implemented from 7 January 2013 onwards.
	ii) Records of all pre-application fees received are maintained.	Winchester City Council	To be recorded on UNI-form from 7 January 2013 onwards.	Quarterly returns for all host authorities to be produced from 1 April 2013 onwards.
	iii) SDNPA to hold all planning related fees.	SDNPA	SDNPA to implement and help publicise arrangements for the collection and holding all fees.	Effective from 1 April 2013.



<b>C) <u>EIA screening and scoping of applications</u></b>	<p>Confirm whether all applications fall within Category 1 or category 2 at validation stage.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p>	<p>SDNPA to prepare a template in UNIFORM for confirmation to be recorded. SDNPA and host authorities to record on SDNPA UNIFORM system within 3 working days of receipt.</p>	<p>Performance to be measured from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p>
<b>D) <u>Validation and registration of applications.</u></b>	<p>i) Early validation of all valid householder and minor applications.</p> <p>ii) Early validation of all valid major applications.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p> <p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p>	<p>Assess against most recent SDNPA Validation List</p> <p>Assess against most recent SDNPA Validation List.</p>	<p>Validation within 3 working days for valid minor and other applications.</p> <p>Validation within 5 working days for valid major applications.</p>

	<p>iii) Continuously work to improve the number of applications that are valid at the first validation attempt.</p> <p>iv) Districts to provide County Councils with UPRN for County applications in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p> <p>Winchester City Council.</p>	<p>Achieve a 75% validation rate at first attempt of validation.</p> <p>Provide UPRN within one working day of request.</p>	<p>Monitoring in place and to be achieved by 1 April 2013.</p> <p>To be monitored by the SDNPA as part of the host authority annual performance review.</p>
<p><b>E) <u>Recording and filing</u>, including planning registers and records.</b></p>	<p>i) Electronic files are used and public access is available through the SDNPA UNIFORM Public Access system.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA.</p>	<p>Template to be prepared by SDNPA to be used on UNIFORM system.</p>	<p>All applications to be recorded on relevant UNIFORM module.</p>

	ii) All notes and information should be recorded on an electronic file to provide a clear audit trail.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA.	All relevant notes to be recorded and stored on UNIFORM.	Files to be updated on an on-going daily basis.
<b>F) <u>Statutory advertising</u> - consultations, neighbour notification and site notices.</b>	i) Standard consultation requirements apply to all authorities to provide clarity on the agreed notification and consultation procedures that are to be followed.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Consultation is undertaken in accordance with the SDNPA Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (not required for tree or any prior approval notifications).	Site notices to be displayed on all sites.  Neighbour notification and all other advertising to be undertaken within 10 working days of validation.

<b>G) <u>Processing of applications.</u></b>	i) Improvement of outcomes is achieved by working to add value to proposals throughout the processing of all cases.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Completion of “Added value” records on SDNPA UNIFORM system and on-going monitoring and reporting. Added value record to be completed to confirm and demonstrate proportional pro-active working with applicant.	SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports from 1 April 2013 onwards.
<b>H) <u>Site visits and recording</u></b>	<p>i) All applications are subject to a site visit by the case officer.</p> <p>ii) Officer site visits notes recorded on UNIFORM, including logging of site notes and assessments and other records and photographs.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p> <p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA.</p>	<p>All site visits to be undertaken within 15 working days of validation.</p> <p>Date of site visit to be recorded in UNIFORM. All notes and records to be recorded in UNIFORM within 2 working days of site visit.</p>	<p>SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p> <p>SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p>

<b>I) <u>Reports, decisions and conditions.</u></b>	i) All delegated and Committee applications are the subject of an officer report.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	All reports to set out reasons for the recommendation, conditions (where appropriate) and make reference to relevant policies.	Applied to all cases from 1 July 2012 onwards.
	ii) Consistent approach across the National Park for both delegated and Committee reports.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Only the approved SDNPA report templates to be used from July 2012 onwards.	Applied to all cases from 1 July 2012 onwards.
	iii) Committee and delegated reports are available to customers and the public.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	All delegated and Committee reports to be available on relevant website, in accordance with local protocols.	Available within 2 working days of publication of the Committee agenda or the date of the delegated decision.

	iv) Decision Notice to be available for customers quickly after the decision has been made.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Copy of decision notice to be available on websites once decision has been made.	Available within 2 working days of the decision being made.
	v) Standard conditions to be used, as far as possible	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	SDNPA standard conditions and reasons used once developed and agreed.	By 1 April 2013.
<b>J) <u>The use of specialist advice</u> (design, archaeology, landscape, ecology)</b>	i) Protocol in place for the use and application of specialist advice across the National Park.	SDNPA	SDNPA to prepare protocol on agreed process and related funding arrangements.	Agreed procedure to be developed by April 2013.

	ii) Protocol to be applied consistently across the National Park.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Once adopted, Protocol to be used by all host authorities and the SDNPA.	Agreed procedure to be operative from April 2013 onwards.
<b><u>K) Member site visits and protocols.</u></b>	i) Member site visits to take place before Committee meetings, whenever possible, in order to reduce delays in decisions for customers.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Practices currently vary in different host authorities.	All authorities to work towards operating this arrangement from 1 April 2013 onwards.
	ii) All site visits follow an agreed protocol which has been published by the host authority or the SDNPA.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Protocol to be agreed and publicised on host authority and SDNPA websites. Host authority protocols to follow general approach in approved SDNPA protocol.	Protocols to be adopted and published on all websites by 1 April 2013.

<b>L) <u>Public speaking at Planning Committees.</u></b>	<p>i) Publication of individual protocols for public speaking at all Planning committees.</p> <p>ii) Each protocol to provide equality of opportunity for all parties and prior notification by public speakers.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p> <p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p>	<p>To be available and published on host authority and SDNPA websites by July 2013.</p> <p>To be available and published on host authority and SDNPA websites.</p>	<p>Compliance of host authority and SDNPA processes to be assessed by 1 September 2013.</p> <p>To be monitored by the SDNPA in September 2013 as part of the host authority annual performance review.</p>
<b>M) <u>Delivering timely decisions.</u></b>	<p>i) Make sound and timely decisions and all planning and related applications. Processes and procedures are developed, improved and adopted to help ensure that timely decisions are reached for customers.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p>	<p>Decisions on 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks.</p> <p>Decisions on 80% of other applications in 8 weeks.</p>	<p>SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p>



			<p>Decisions on 60% of major applications in 13 weeks.</p> <p>Decisions on 60% of applications with an EIA in 16 weeks.</p>	
	ii) Issuing Decision Notices	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Processes in place to issue decisions quickly.	Decisions to be issued within 2 days of date of decision.
	iii) Improving performance and speed of decisions.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Reports setting out delaying factors and impacts to be prepared and used to assess variations.	To be monitored by the SDNPA as part of the host authority annual performance review.

<p><b>N) <u>Section 106 Obligations arrangements</u> to help deliver a common approach to monitoring and compliance.</b></p>	<p>i) Standard section 106 Agreements to be used, where relevant.</p> <p>ii) All section 106 Agreements (unless routine) to be discussed with the SDNPA.</p> <p>iii) All section 106 Agreements to be recorded electronically and copy provided to SDNPA by host authority. SDNPA to monitor and publish quarterly summary reports.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p> <p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p> <p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p>	<p>Section 106 template to be prepared and introduced by the SDNPA during 2013.</p> <p>Liaison through Link officers or other officers, as appropriate.</p> <p>All Section 106 Obligations to be recorded in UNIFORM with background information. SDNPA to use Obligation Tracker to record, monitor and publicise data.</p>	<p>By 1 September 2013</p> <p>In place from 1 April 2012 onwards</p> <p>Host authority to provide copies and details of all Section 106 Obligations within 5 working days of completion. SDNPA to manage monitoring from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p>
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	iv) Improve the proportion of Section 106 Obligations ready for completion at the time of a resolution or decision to approve an application.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Work towards achieving 50% of all cases. Standard templates to be used where possible and appropriate and advice to be issued to applicants at all stages of processing.	<p>Work to achieve 50% of all obligations being ready for completion at time of resolution to approve from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p> <p>SDNPA to monitor as part of the host authority annual performance review.</p>
<b>O) <u>Enforcement and compliance monitoring.</u></b>	i) Enforcement policies updated and published to include an acknowledgement, planned assessment processes and a timetable for action.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Current Enforcement Protocols updated to deliver a more standard approach across the SDNP	<p>By 1 April 2013</p> <p>All complaints to be acknowledged at time of receipt from 1 April 2013 onwards.</p>

	<p>ii) Enforcement Strategy developed which will include timescales for action and prioritisation.</p> <p>iii) Host authorities and SDNPA to work to SDNPA Enforcement Strategy.</p>	<p>SDNPA</p> <p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p>	<p>SDNPA to develop an Enforcement Strategy in partnership with host authorities and to be adopted and in use by 1 July 2013.</p> <p>Actions and performance to be recorded on SDNPA UNIFORM system and to be monitored and reported upon by September 2013.</p>	<p>Strategy under preparation and to be in use by 1 July 2013.</p> <p>SDNPA to produce quarterly monitoring reports and to consider as part of annual performance reviews from 1 September 2013 onwards.</p>
<p><b>P) <u>Customer satisfaction</u> - helping to achieve high levels.</b></p>	<p>i) Customer survey carried out during 2013/14.</p>	<p>SDNPA</p>	<p>SDNPA to undertake National Park wide customer survey during the first half of 2013.</p>	<p>Complete survey by May 2013.</p>

	<p>ii) Results used to help deliver further improvements to service.</p> <p>iii) Deliver service improvements identified in the customer survey.</p>	<p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p> <p>Winchester City Council and the SDNPA</p>	<p>Results analysed and an Improvement Plan developed for future implementation, as appropriate.</p> <p>At least four specific improvement measures to be implemented across the National Park.</p>	<p>Improvement Plan developed by July 2013</p> <p>Four or more specific improvements proposed for implementation from September 2013 onwards.</p>
<p><b>Q) <u>Performance management</u> internally and with the SDNPA.</b></p>	<p>i) Introduce a robust and customer focussed performance management framework.</p>	<p>SDNPA</p>	<p>Performance framework introduced during 2012/13 for monitoring and reporting on performance from 1 January 2013 onwards.</p>	<p>Performance management framework introduced in December 2012.</p>

	ii) SDNPA and host authorities to provide information to help ensure that all performance is appropriately measured and monitored.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	SDNPA and Host authorities to enter all agreed and relevant performance data on SDNPA UNIFORM system	Performance to be monitored by the SDNPA from 1 April 2012 and publicly reported quarterly from December 2012 onwards.
<b>R) <u>Appeal management.</u></b>	i) All appeals to be recorded on and managed through SDNPA UNIFORM system.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	All appeals recorded on SDNPA UNIFORM system.	Recorded on UNIFORM within 2 working days of notification of appeal by PINS.
	ii) All appeal decisions to be recorded on SDNPA UNIFORM system.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	All decisions to be recorded SDNPA UNIFORM system.	Within 2 working days of appeal decision being received.

	iii) High level of overall performance on appeals.	Winchester City Council and the SDNPA	Overall success rate of 75% on SDNPA appeals.	To be monitored through SDNPA UNiform system on a quarterly basis.
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**Agreed Version – 20 February 2013**